

# A SCRAP OF PAPER

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“ISN'T that Jack Delman, the polo-player?” I remarked to my companion as he resumed his seat. My eyes idly followed the two people he had been speaking to, as they made their way out of the restaurant. The man, bronzed, clean-cut, hard-as-nails, typical of all that is best in English athleticism; the woman, graceful, fair, and utterly charming without being exactly pretty. They had paused by our table and spoken to the man I was dining with—spoken as people speak to a very old friend. And he had answered in the same strain. Then they had passed on, and Eustace Nolan, my companion, eminent critic and writer of *belles-lettres*, had sat down again with a faint reminiscent smile. He, too, watched them in silence until they were out of sight; then with the smile still on his lips he turned to me.

“Quite right,” he remarked. “That’s Jack Delman—polo-player, master of hounds, cricketer, golfer, etc., etc. And with him was Loraine Delman—his wife.”

“Loraine Delman!” I repeated. “Surely the name is familiar!”

Eustace Nolan’s smile expanded.

“To all save the utter Philistines even more so than his. She writes books, and very good books. Even I, who impartially damn everybody who practices that nefarious trade, have to admit they’re good.”

“Of course,” I murmured, “I remember now.” And

then for want of something to say I continued, idly: "A rather daring experiment in the marriage-line; there can't be much in common between them. Do they get on well?"

"They didn't look as if they were on the verge of divorce, did they?" He was still smiling gently to himself, as a man smiles who enjoys some secret thoughts of his own. "And yet she neither hunts—nor does she play either golf or tennis."

"A case of opposites hitting it off, I suppose." And I glanced across at him. "What the dickens are you smiling about in that aggravating way?"

He answered with another question.

"Did you happen to notice that pearl locket she was wearing?"

"I did. Why?"

"What do you think is inside it?"

I raised my eyebrows.

"My dear old boy," I remarked, "as to the best of my belief this is the first time I've ever seen her, how should I possibly know? Presumably a miniature of her husband—or of one of the children, if she's got any."

He lit a cigar with the solemnity of the true connoisseur before he spoke again.

"In that locket," he said, thoughtfully, "is the foundation of one of the happiest married lives that it has ever been my fortune to come in contact with—the married life of those two who have just left the restaurant. It consists of a scrap of paper, and on that scrap of paper is written as follows: 'Aristotle. Born 384 B.C. Died 322.'"

For a moment or two I thought he was joking. The smile still lingered on his lips, while he studied the

lighted end of his cigar critically. Apparently satisfied, he looked across at me.

"Just that—and nothing more," he continued. "And yet it had nothing whatever to do with that gentleman's logic; rather was it all quite illogical."

"Confound you, Eustace," I cried, "cease riddling me with riddles. What magic charm did such a bald and uninteresting fact work? And how? And why? You've roused my curiosity; now you've got to satisfy it."

For a while he hesitated; then he beckoned for the bill.

"That's fair," he said, "though I don't know whether I'm justified in doing so. You see—it's not my secret. It's just one of those things which one comes across in life which belong to the sacred intimacy of others. But it's also one of those things which it does one good to remember. Such a small thing—and yet such a big one. So I just want your promise that it won't go farther, and then, if you care to, we'll stroll round to my rooms and I'll tell you the story of that scrap of paper."

"You have my promise, of course," I answered, and a few minutes later we were strolling along Piccadilly to his flat in Jermyn Street.

"I've known Loraine Delman," he began, when we were comfortably settled, "ever since she was the height of that coal-scuttle. She used, at the age of fourteen, to come and show me her immature attempts at writing—and even at that age I could see possibilities. She had to a marked extent what for want of a better phrase I will call the dramatic sense. In her baby way she could tell a story—and if only a few of our present-day writers would concentrate on that



rather than on dissecting their kedgerree minds there would be the devil of a number more books sold.

“Right from the start I encouraged her to persevere. And I very soon realized that it was not just the whim of a growing girl. She was keen, and she had in her that creative impulse which must express itself. It is present in all of us—though modern civilization decrees that only the minority can attempt to give it its natural outlet. It so frequently fails to provide one with that necessary commodity—bread and butter.

“In her case it was different. A kindly aunt had died and left Loraine all her money, so that at the age of nineteen she had a thousand a year of her own, which was quite enough and yet not too much. At the age of twenty-one she completed her first book. She sent it to me, and I realized as soon as I had read it that all my hopes were going to be fulfilled. There were faults in it, of course—faults of technique, faults of construction—but what did that matter? The vital spark was there—the life spark. And that’s all that counts. Technique can be acquired; the spark is given and can never be bought.

“However, this isn’t a dissertation on the craft of writing. She got her first book published without the slightest difficulty. She’d have had none even without my help, but a private word from me settled things quicker. And a year later she finished her second. It fulfilled all the promise of the first, and made a great advance on it. In fact, it settled definitely that there was a big future in front of her, and, mentally, I sat down to watch it develop.”

With a faint smile he pitched the butt-end of his cigar into the grate.

“It came almost as a shock to me when she wrote

and told me that she was engaged. I suppose it hadn't occurred to me that she was grown-up; when you've dandled 'em as kids on your knee, and pulled the pig-tails of flapper-hood—I may say that it was before the days when the ambition of every girl was to make her head like a cedar-mop broom—you're apt to forget that they are grown-up. So one Sunday I went off to see the young man.

“Well, you know Jack Delman—so I won't describe him physically. And six years ago he was just the same—a perfect young specimen of manhood. How he'd met her and why he'd fallen in love with her, with her totally dissimilar tastes, is beside the point. All that matters is that they were perfectly dotty about one another, and since there was no reason for delay they intended to get married at once. He had money of his own and was a year older than she was—so that from the accepted standpoint it was a most satisfactory match. They would get a house in a hunting country, with a flat in London as well. And he would hunt and shoot and play polo—and she would have her work to occupy her. Also, later on, they were going to travel a bit. Everything quite idyllic. In fact, so idyllic that one or two faint and unworthy doubts I had in my mind almost died. Almost—not quite; I'm a cynical blighter, I fear.

“However, I had to confess to myself that there was no justification for them when I went to stay at their place soon after they returned from their honeymoon. Jack took me all round the stables—a form of entertainment which I particularly dread, as my knowledge of horses is confined to which end goes first. Then he took me on at tennis—a distressing affair, when I only succeeded in connecting with the ball

twice, and then in the wrong direction. After that he gave up the unequal contest and left me to my own devices and Loraine.

“She was in the middle of a new book, and we discussed it in the sacred holy of holies which was set apart for her writing. I read a bit of it, with intense curiosity. What effect had marriage with this enthusiastic ball-striker had on her work? And I had to confess to myself that not only had it not suffered, but that it had improved.

“‘Happy, my dear?’ I said to her, as she slipped her arm through mine in the garden before dinner.

“‘Utterly, completely, and absolutely,’ she answered, and she certainly looked it.

“So did he; I’ve never seen a couple more intensely happy than they both seemed. He would ask her with intense solemnity if Mabel had been kissed by the villain yet; she would counter with tender inquiries as to the right front leg of one of his horses. And then they’d laugh and look at one another, while I pretended not to notice. For the look wasn’t hard to interpret, and horses and books and ball games and work are just the merest etceteras of life when a man and a woman feel that way.”

He paused and pushed the whisky in my direction.

“Help yourself, old man; I’m coming to our friend Aristotle soon. I didn’t see them again for over two years: I was in America most of the time. And when I came back I had a lot of things to do which kept me in London. But one day at the club I ran into her publisher, and we lunched together. A human fellow—very human, who took a real interest in his authors as well as in their books.



“‘Seen your *protégée* lately?’ he asked, suddenly. ‘Lorraine Delman, I mean.’

“I told him I was only just back from the States and hadn’t seen anybody.

“‘A clinking good book—that last one of hers,’ I continued. ‘Or perhaps there is yet another that I haven’t seen?’

“‘There is,’ he said, and his tone of voice made me look at him nervously.

“‘What’s the matter with it?’ I asked. ‘Isn’t it up to form?’

“‘Yes and no,’ he answered, thoughtfully. ‘It’s good in its way—very good. Almost the best she’s done, in fact. But there’s a new note in it, Nolan—and one I’m sorry to see.’

“‘And that is?’ I asked.

“‘Bitterness. I wondered if you could supply the clew.’ And then he added as an after-thought: ‘You know there was a baby, don’t you?’

“‘I didn’t,’ I said, ‘but I’m not surprised.’

“‘It died,’ he remarked.

“‘By Jove! I am out of things,’ I cried. ‘I wish I’d known: I’d have written to her. But perhaps that accounts for the bitterness.’

“‘Perhaps it does,’ he said, but it struck me he didn’t think so.

“Anyway, what he said quite decided me. I should have gone down anyway to look them up; now I made up my mind to go at once. Lorraine bitter! I didn’t like the sound of that at all. Though, Heaven knows, the loss of her first kid might make any woman so.

“I wrote her a line telling her I was back, and by return I got a letter asking me to go and stay for as long as I liked. So down I went to their charming

house in the hunting country, determined to solve the mystery of Loraine's bitterness. There was certainly no trace of it visible as she greeted me when I arrived about tea-time. She was just her own charming self, and for a few minutes we talked about my trip to America. Then the maid brought tea and lit the lamps, and we got down to more personal topics.

" 'Where is Jack?' I asked, as she handed me my cup.

" 'My dear Eustace,' she answered, with a faint smile, 'where do you think? Out hunting, of course. He won't be back till late this evening. The meet was at the other side of the county.'

" 'I see,' I murmured. 'Only, perceiving the third cup, I wondered.'

" 'Hubert Daventry said he might drop in,' she answered, casually. 'Do you know him by any chance?'

" 'The artist, do you mean?' and she nodded. 'Oh, yes, I know him.'

"I suppose there was something in the tone of my voice that said more than the mere words, for she looked at me quickly.

" 'Don't you like him?'

" 'My dear, I only know him very slightly,' I replied, and changed the conversation.

"Now it was quite true that I did only know Hubert Daventry very slightly, but I knew his reputation very well. And he was one of the last men in the world whom I would have chosen to have hanging round any woman who was anything to do with me. Heaven knows, I'm not and never have been particularly squeamish, but Daventry was a putrid specimen. Clever, very good-looking, and most amusing—his

specialty was other men's wives. There was a case of a fellow in some cavalry regiment who flogged him almost unconscious in Jermyn Street one night. . . . So you get the man. And, as so often happens, women didn't spot it—until it was too late. Why they don't recognize that particular brand is one of the unexplained mysteries, but there it is.

“And yet I had to admit to myself when he came in that there was nothing particularly spottable about him. The conversation while he remained was general; he told a couple of stories about men I knew extremely well; he seemed what, in fact, he was, an agreeable, well-bred man of the world.

“It was as he rose to go that he made the only remark which could possibly be construed into something slightly personal.

“‘I think I've got exactly what you want, Mrs. Delman. It took a bit of finding, and it will take more keeping. So you must let me know as soon as possible what you finally decide.’

“‘I will,’ she said. ‘And thank you most awfully.’

“With that he was gone, and she turned to me.

“‘He's looking for a small flat for me in London,’ she said, quietly. ‘They seem very hard to get.’

“‘But are you thinking of leaving this house?’ I asked, surprised. ‘I thought you loved it.’

“Her hands clenched at her sides.

“‘It stifles me, Eustace—utterly stifles me. From morning to night the atmosphere is concentrated sport, sport, sport. The people round here think of nothing else; Jack thinks of nothing else. And if it wasn't for Hubert Daventry I don't know what I'd do. He's the only person with whom it is possible to obtain five minutes' intelligent conversation.’



“So it had come to that, had it?”

“‘My dear,’ I said, gently, ‘I’m sorry. Aren’t things well with you and Jack?’”

“She didn’t answer for a time, and when she did it was in a rather unexpected way.

“‘My new book,’ she said, ‘is utterly rotten. I’m under no delusions: it’s rotten.’”

“A step sounded in the hall, and she gripped my arm.

“‘Not a word to Jack. I trust you.’”

“The next moment he came in—radiant with health, his pink coat covered with mud.

“‘Great to see you, old man!’ he cried. ‘Splendid run. Ten-mile point and pulled him down in the open.’”

“He bubbled with it. We got the run field by field and spinney by spinney, and while he was drinking his whisky-and-soda I caught Loraine’s eye. And the look she gave me said as plainly as if she had spoken: ‘Now you can judge for yourself.’”

Nolan paused and lit a cigarette.

“It is boring,” he continued, “there’s no good denying it. Hunting shop to people who don’t hunt is a dreadful infliction, and as I went up to dress for dinner things were clearer. And the clearer they became the more sorry I was. Though I’m not a marrying man myself, I’ve got illusions on the subject. Moreover, I loved both of them.

“At dinner that night things became clearer still. There were only the three of us, and they each talked to me rather than to one another. To the outsider everything was quite normal; to me, who had known them in the past, the change was marked. No more of those little intimate jokes and leg-pulls, but just re-



serve. And it was I who quite unwittingly introduced the personal element by mentioning Daventry. I regretted it the instant after, but the mischief was done.

“Jack frowned heavily, and Loraine was up in arms at once.

“‘He was having tea here this afternoon, Jack,’ she said, clearly.

“‘Well, he’s a damned outsider,’ returned her husband. ‘Don’t you agree with me, Eustace?’

“‘Of course, he doesn’t hunt,’ said Loraine, sweetly.

“Jack laughed. ‘Hunt! That swab! Why, he’d fall off a horse walking along the road.’

“‘But then he does know that Rachmaninoff didn’t build the Pyramids,’ said his wife still more sweetly, and Jack flushed and dried up.

“‘It was all so foolish, and so easy, and so pathetic. And the devil of it was that there seemed to be nothing to do. However well you know two people, you can’t interfere in a show of that sort unless you’re specifically asked to. And even then the betting is that you will incur the undying enmity of both. The cure has got to come from within and not without, and during the next two or three days I began to fear that things had gone too far for any cure. Every night after dinner Jack retired to his study, and long after I’d gone to bed I used to hear him coming upstairs. He said nothing to me, and she didn’t allude to the subject again—but it was obvious that things couldn’t go on as they were. Something would have to happen, and happen soon. It did: on the night but one before I was due to go. Jack was dining out at some house in the neighborhood with a bachelor party who were down for the hunting, and Loraine and I dined alone.

“‘It was a crisp, frosty night, and after dinner we

decided to go for a walk. For a long time we walked in silence, and then she deliberately reverted to the subject of her relations with Jack. Step by step she traced them, and I listened with a hopeless sort of feeling. Had they come to the parting of the roads, or had they not? That was the question—reiterated again and again.

“‘I don’t know what to do, Eustace,’ she said, as we got back to the house again and went into the drawing-room. ‘He’d be happy enough away from me once the shock was over. I’m no companion to him.’

“‘You were once, my dear,’ I said. ‘You were both such wonderful pals.’

“‘Yes—we were once,’ she echoed, wearily. ‘But you can’t stand still, Eustace. Oh, it isn’t his fault, and I don’t think it’s mine. It’s just happened—that’s all. He thinks of nothing, lives for nothing, cares for nothing but sport. Why, he was hunting four days after Billy died.’

“‘She was looking at a photograph in a silver frame—the photograph of her baby. And in her eyes was a look of passionate, yearning love.

“‘But, dear girl,’ I said, ‘that doesn’t mean he didn’t care. Men take things like that differently to women.’

“‘Anyway, it doesn’t matter,’ she cried. ‘Don’t let’s think about that. The point is what to do now. I can’t work in this house; my nerves are all on edge. And am I to sacrifice the whole of my career, just because I haven’t the nerve to take a final step to end it? Look at him! He goes off every night to his study to read some trashy sporting novel, and then he objects to my friends.’

“‘Lorraine,’ I said, quietly, ‘Davenport is a bit of a rotter.’

“‘He’s amusing, anyway, and surely I’m old enough to take care of myself,’ she answered. ‘No, Eustace—it’s the old question. I was a fool to think that I could escape it. Just at first everything was wonderful; but now—’

“She paused and stared at the fire.

“‘Don’t you love him any more, my dear?’ I asked, gently.

“‘Love him! Oh, yes—I still love him, I suppose. In a way. But even so, love isn’t everything, Eustace.’

“‘It’s damned near it,’ I said. ‘And it seems to me that once you’ve had the wonderful love which you and Jack had for one another you ought to think, and go on thinking again and again, before you cut it out of your life.’

“She made a little gesture of impatience.

“‘I’ve been thinking for a year,’ she answered. ‘Oh, Eustace—I want to be free—free. And I can never be free in this house.’

“Free. The cry of all the ages. And what a futile cry it is! As if any human being can ever be free in the true sense of the word! We’re all dependent on some one, or they’re dependent on us. But all I said was:—

“‘You were free enough here, Loraine, three years ago. A big love is the nearest approach to freedom you can have. It washes out selfishness.’

“But she wouldn’t listen, and I knew it was best for her to get it off her mind. It wasn’t as if she was going to leave Jack for good; they could still meet and spend some of their time together. If he wanted to—that’s to say.

“‘But don’t you know that he wants to?’ I said.



'I'm not much of a judge on such matters, but I've seen him looking at you when you didn't know he was, and, Loraine, I don't think he's altered.'

"She shook her head.

"'Oh, yes, he has! We've both altered. It's no one's fault—it's just happened.'

"Again and again she said that, and at length I saw there was no good going on.

"'If you feel that way—you'd better go, my dear. Perhaps you'll change your mind once you've taken the step.'

"'If only he wasn't so awfully decent,' she said, quietly, sitting down and cupping her hands under her chin. 'So wonderfully white. I've never seen Jack do a rotten thing—get drunk or make a beast of himself. Or even lose his temper. It's that which makes it so hard. I wouldn't hurt him, Eustace, for the world.'

"And then I realized. She was just arguing aloud; trying to convince herself—not me.

"'You admit it will hurt him, then, if you go?' I said.

"'It'll hurt me, too, in a way,' she said, standing up suddenly. 'Oh, don't you see that's the whole point. One part of me longs to be free; the other longs for the love and—and the passion of when we were first married. And between the two I'm on the rack.'

"Career versus love; the old story. And the decision must lie with her, and her alone. Only in her case the love was buried. I couldn't believe it was dead, somehow—though too long burial is a dangerous thing.

"'If only he wasn't so decent and straight,' she repeated, wearily. 'Anyway, let's go to bed.'



“And at that moment the door opened and Jack entered. For a moment I stared at him in amazement, and I heard Loraine catch her breath. For Jack Delman was what I had never seen him before—drunk. Not tight, mark you—not merely merry, but blind drunk. He lurched to a chair, and sat there staring at us foolishly. His tie was half off, his waistcoat undone, and he wasn’t a pleasant spectacle.

“‘Jack!’ gasped his wife. ‘What’s the matter with you?’

“‘Matter, my dear,’ he said, unsteadily. ‘Nothing matter. I’se little—little bit—’toxicated. Thatsh all.’

“‘She swung round on me, and there was a new look in her eyes.’

“‘That settles it,’ she said, quietly, and with that she left the room.

“‘The last straw, and I swore inwardly. If only he hadn’t got drunk on that of all nights; if only, even, he’d gone straight to his own room. Upstairs the door of her room banged, and I turned to Jack.

“‘I’ll help you up to bed,’ I said, curtly, and he laughed.

“‘Thank you, Eustace, for your well-meant offer of assistance,’ he answered, ‘but I’m quite capable of getting there myself. Pretty good effort on my part, wasn’t it?’

“‘I stared at him in amazement.

“‘Good Lord, you’re not drunk!’ I said, foolishly.

“‘Far from it,’ he replied.

“‘Then what the devil—’ I began.

“‘Oh, don’t let’s go over it again,’ he broke in wearily. ‘I happened to have been sitting over in that alcove behind the curtain in the window, reading one

of my trashy hunting novels. And I'm afraid I've been eavesdropping.'

" 'But, good heavens, old man!' I cried, 'why didn't you come out?'

"He stared at me somberly.

" 'What would have been the good?' he answered. 'We all know where we stand now. I'm not particularly bright, Eustace, as you heard to-night. My God is sport—and this house stifles her.' For a moment I thought he was going to break down. 'It didn't stifle her when we first came to it. Why, it was on that sofa that we used to discuss her first book after we got married.'

"He turned away, and was silent for a while.

" 'If she wants to go, Eustace—she shall go. It's not fair to spoil her life—though, God knows, I've tried not to. I know I can't talk to her; I know I'm a perfect damned fool. But I'd hoped—' He paused abruptly, and stared at the window with a weary little smile that I had no clew to. 'However, that's over now. And I don't suppose it would have been much use anyway. But, oh! great heavens, it's like cutting out part of one's life.'

"He buried his head in his hands, and his shoulders heaved.

" 'Decent,' he muttered. 'What's the use of that? Once a man and a woman have been mates—decency is no good. I've been a fool, Eustace—all through. It didn't occur to me to sit moping after the kid died—though I loved him as much as she did. But it hurt her; I see it now.'

"Once again he was silent; then he swung round.

" 'You're not to tell her,' he cried. 'You're to let her go on thinking I was drunk to-night. I got the

idea, you see, from what she said—and got out through the window. Perhaps later on, when she's given things a trial—you might—let her know. And until then—look after her, old man. It's not her women pals I mind, though they frighten me to death—but if that sweep Daventry—'

"He paused and his fists clenched.

" 'I'll look after her, Jack,' I said, gruffly. The momentary passion at the thought of Daventry had died out of his eyes; they were just hopelessly weary again.

" 'Thanks,' he said. 'And if you don't mind I think I'll go to bed now.'

"I heard him go upstairs to his own room, and after a while I switched off the lights and followed. Things had come to a head with a vengeance, but maybe it was all for the best. We'd let her have her way, and later on, when a little more water had passed under the bridge, I'd tell her."

Nolan smiled faintly, and helped himself to a whisky-and-soda.

"Thus does man propose: Fate works otherwise. When I got down the next morning Jack had already gone out—hunting again. And shortly after Loraine came down herself. With an expressionless face she glanced at her husband's used plate, but she made no remark. And it was not till after breakfast that she told me she had written to Daventry saying she would take the flat.

" 'It's not merely because of what happened last night, Eustace,' she remarked, quietly. 'That was just the final thing that settled it. And, in a way, I'm glad.'

" 'But was she? I watched her all that day as she



moved about the house—fingering this, touching that, as if she were saying good-by. And a dozen times the truth trembled on the tip of my tongue, but I bit it back. If things were to come right in the long run, it would be better to leave it for the present—much better. Later on I'd do it: it would keep. Just now she might think it was a put-up job—an excuse.

"It was about three o'clock that she suddenly came into the room where I was doing some overdue work.

"'Eustace,' she said, and her voice was numb, 'they're bringing something up the drive. Something on a stretcher. Will you come?'

"For a moment I didn't understand; then I dashed to the front door. It was Jack right enough, and from the color of his face I feared the worst.

"'Is he dead?' I muttered, stupidly.

"'No, sir,' said one of the men carrying him, 'but he's had a terrible fall. Over wire. Horse broke its back.'

"'Take him upstairs,' said Loraine, calmly. 'And, Eustace, please 'phone for the doctor.'

"She took charge of everything, and I ran about from room to room feeling the usual unutterable nuisance a man does in such circumstances. The doctor came, made his examination, and departed rubbing his hands.

"'No need for anxiety, Mrs. Delman,' he announced. 'He'll be hunting again in a month. But you must really speak to your young man, you know. He never turns his head from anything, but to-day he was more reckless than ever. We can't have him breaking his neck.'

"'Of course, this alters it, Eustace,' she said when the doctor had gone. 'I can't go until he's fit again.'



“And the truth trembled for the thirteenth time—trembled and came out. She listened to me with dawning amazement on her face, and when I’d finished she rose unsteadily to her feet.

“‘Pretending,’ she whispered. ‘So as to give me a chance. Oh, thank God! thank God! my man—you weren’t killed.’ She walked over to the window and stood staring out. And then suddenly she bent forward, and took two books from behind the cushion on the seat.

“For a while she stared at them uncomprehendingly, and then I heard her whisper very low: ‘Eustace—come here.’

“I crossed to her side, and together we looked at the books. One was a notebook filled with Jack’s scrawling handwriting; the other was a volume of an Encyclopedia. And in it was a bit of paper on which was written—‘Aristotle. Born 384 B.C. Died 322.’

“The books fell from her hands, and the next moment she was sobbing her heart out in my arms.

“‘So that’s what he went to his study for—and I talked about trashy hunting novels.’

“I confess that for the life of me I couldn’t speak. I’d got the clew now to that twisted smile of his last night—dear lad.

“‘Oh, you precious bit of paper!’ she cried, kissing old Aristotle. And then she stared at me through her tear-drenched eyes.

“‘Riding more recklessly than ever to-day. Oh, Jack—you’ve just got to forgive me. Go up and see him, Eustace: tell him you’ve told me. And ask him if I may come.’”

Again Nolan smiled quietly.

“As I say, I’m not a marrying man—but I have

illusions. And they weren't shattered that afternoon. I just heard his voice—a bit low and shaky—as she came past me to his bedside; I just saw her go down on her knees beside him with a little sobbing cry. And then I went out and left them. And I suppose things must have been all right, for about two hours later Hubert Daventry rang up. He wanted to speak to Loraine. So I called through the door to tell her.

“They both answered.

“She said: ‘Tell him I don't want his beastly flat.’

“He said: ‘Tell him to go to blazes.’ ”



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